1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

country "stations"[5] the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for Communion first. On the road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from "stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners; represent the interests of the community before priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and government official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to round out the picture.

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of

[5] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

561 554 888 276 whiskey, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of tobacco, go to the elder men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe around among one's intimates and guests for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man. He must content himself with an occasional "fag." When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells:

> During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door, I said to her she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. "Let the young bucks go," said I; "they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly." She looked at me and says, "Frank, are you serious?" "I am, faith," says I; "call the old man back." He was just a few paces down the road. She did and his face lighted up and he couldn't thank her enough.

561 554 888 Informal as these differences are, they are nevertheless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct among the small farmers. Without them, the flavor of country life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the never-varying annual round of social activity in the country districts nor any inkling of the importance of those informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. It is here that social patterns of behavior upon age difference assume importance as controls of human activity. It is here that the roles the age grades play in the organization of the community reveal themselves most clearly.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the interests of the community, before priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman and government official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel.

The relation extends in fact to very small matters indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of tobacco, go to the older men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe round among one's intimates and guests, for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man; he must content himself with an occasional 'fag'. When there is little, the young man can go without.

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276 561 576 I; call back the old man. He was just a few paces down the road. She did, and his face lighted up and he couldn't thank her enough."

561 517 Informal as these differences are, they are nevertheless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct among small farmers. Without them the flavour of rural life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the continual round of informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. For the country-people have their entertainments, like their more sophisticated urban contemporaries. The student of society cannot afford to dismiss them as inconsequential. They are often important controls of human activity.

When my colleagues and I first made our way into the rural communities we were to come to know best, we were plunged into a mass of observations which seemed to have no interpretation. Night after night, their day's work done, our new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, gambles, sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive gatherings were age-old customs like the bonfires of St. John's Eve; others celebrated crucial events, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occa-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

778 like a basin; it contains almost a gallon of water; it is curious how it came there, for there is not a pebble of granite here."

527 The people of the same island keep as a special holiday the 11th of April, St. Leo's day, and will not do any work on it, while the inhabitants of Inishbofin do not observe it at all.

773 823 2. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many legends and traditional tales about places on the islands, of which the few which could be collected are given below; the main outlines only, in which all versions agree, are related, as each story was heard from more than one person, and the versions differed in detail.

Lough Bofin (*The Lake of the White Cow*).—A very long time ago, so long that nobody knows exactly when, Inishshark was a well-known island, and was inhabited; but Inishbofin was unknown, as, owing to enchantment, it was invisible. One day two fishermen were lost in a dense fog, and drifted on until they found themselves beside a rock, on which they landed and made a fire.[1] As soon as the fire touched the rock, the fog suddenly lifted, and the men found themselves on the shingly beach (now called the North Beach) of a strange island; on one side of the shingly belt on which they were was the sea, and on the other a lough, and close to them was an old woman driving a white cow down to the water. She drove the cow into the lake, and struck her with a stick, when she was at once turned into a rock. One of the fishermen, who had followed out of curiosity, was very angry at what he saw, and in his rage he struck the woman, and at once both he and she were transformed into stones. The rock and stones may be seen there still. The cow used to rise up out of the lake, and walk about the island when any great event was about to happen, but it is now more than thirty years since she was last seen. It is from this cow that the island takes its name (Inis bo-finne).

173 *Carrig Guairim.*—An old chief of the islands named Guairim (or Gorham), whose castle was situated just above Bofin harbour, had a dispute with the monks of St. Colman's Abbey about the payment of tithe, and, not content with not paying, he, with the assistance of a family named Halligan, took the settlement of the dispute into his own hands by seizing six of the monks, whom he slew by the road-side in Middlequarter, at a spot where their blood is said to be seen still on the anniversaries of the murder. Gorham did not escape unpunished for this bloodthirsty act; he was taken over to Rinvyle

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[1] Another version is—"One of them knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for they had pipes then, though we do not know what they used to smoke in them."

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

764
178 characterized by storytelling, games of various sorts, contests of strength, taunting
764 and mocking, mischief-making, and factional fighting (O Suilleabhain 1967: 26–129). It is hard to imagine a wake more somber than that which takes place in Inis Beag. Most of those who attend it do so before midnight and stay two to three hours, coming and going at will, while "only those who own him stay all night." Each visitor on arrival prays briefly at the bedside of the deceased or in the doorway of the room before expressing condolences, and at midnight all who are anywhere in the wake-house kneel and recite the responses of the Rosary intoned
[178] by the curate. Immediate kin express their grief in muffled sobs beside the corpse, but the ancient wailing lament for the dead, known as the "keen," no longer is
[273] heard in Inis Beag. Tables and benches are set up in the kitchen on which the
[276] men sit silently or converse in whispers with their neighbors, as they drink stout
[562] or whiskey and pass around clay pipes offered them "to keep the night awake." Most of the women congregate in the room of the dead, where only very old women smoke pipes. I have counted as many as 18 minutes of absolute silence at a wake and have never heard laughter.

[562] Before the procession to the church forms, men tend to gather in small groups outside the house of the deceased and women gather inside the house. After the corpse is placed in the coffin, close relatives and even friends shake the hand and kiss the face of the dead person before the top is nailed down; then the box is carried to the front street and placed across two chairs for prayers to be said and holy water sprinkled over it by the priest. A white sheet is draped on the casket, and six pallbearers shoulder it and carry it through a gap made in the stone fence to the road which leads to the chapel. The pallbearers are both agnatic and uterine kin of the deceased, excluding his sons, and two of them have the further duty of digging the shallow grave that night or in the morning before the body is interred. Moving slowly behind the coffin bearers, the procession is headed by the spouse and sons of the dead person, followed by his daughters, then women, and finally men in a long, slow moving, silent column; children other than the offspring of the deceased seldom join the procession, and the sexes walk separately.
[793] The curate may or may not lead this procession and the one the next morning, sometimes preferring to go ahead to church and cemetery by himself. A son of the dead person treats the grave diggers to stout in a pub before they set out with spades for the graveyard, as he does the pallbearers after they return from the
[178] church. In the past, the grave was dug as part of the funeral service, but this custom was altered as the cemetery became filled and occasionally diggers by acci-
[538] dent broke into previously interred coffins revealing their contents. A number of grisly legends and anecdotes tell of islanders buried alive by mistake, or whose bodies were partially preserved, as revealed by such accidents.

The procession from the chapel to the graveyard leaves the modern road, as we saw in Chapter 1, to follow an ancient, obliterated trail past a church believed to have been buried beneath the sand centuries ago, and then climbs the long hill of kitchen midden and sand to the gate of the cemetery. Here the column breaks up, some people going to the graves of relatives to pray and others to the newly opened grave. Men and women kneel separately at the graveside for the service (see Fig. 11), and many of the women cry as the casket is lowered into the shallow